

[P. 163 b] Kechayi

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Officials

622
[361] The chief (ti'ya) functioned as among the Central Foothill tribes. His house was always on the west side of the village, regardless of his moiety affiliations. It was the only house given a special location. He "was the richest man, every one had to pay him at a mourning ceremony whether they wanted to or not." There was no physical punishment or direct penalty for a person who did not pay, but one who was able to pay and did not would be in disfavor with the chief and would lack the latter's personal support when he might want it. The chief did no hunting; "he told his winatum to tell some men to go hunt for him." For this the men were not paid. E.M. did not think that the chief's wives could lay claim to seeds and acorns in the same manner, but payments to the chief or his wives might be made in these products when occasion arose. The duties of the wives, also called tiya as were their sons and daughters, were primarily those of hostesses. They often advised other women in their private affairs and carried weight in the community with prestige as well as personality.

622
556 Feasts or parties, like those given by chiefs of the lake tribes, were given by Kechayi and Gashowu chiefs. There was no set time for them; they occurred two or three times during a year, that is, between fall and spring when village life was integrated. Announcement of the feast was made in advance by the winatums; everyone in the village was invited. The chief, his immediate family, and relatives, provided the food and cooked it. Such affairs lasted about three days, alternating games, dancing, shamanistic displays, and sweating with the feasting. No payment was made by the guests. There was no moiety division at these parties.

[616]
622 The position of chief passed from brother to brother, then reverted to the eldest son of the eldest brother. This, at least, was the theory of its inheritance. The brothers "had been working together," and the successor was experienced and knew in personal detail the duties and privileges which he was taking over. A chief's son "stayed with his father all the time" in order to hear and learn the functions which he would later be called upon to perform. Before he died, a chief would designate his successor.

[551] At Aholu'i, a Kechayi village on the San Joaquin River not far from Auberry, E.M.'s father's brother, Gaida'na, was chief. After him came Huhutu'tu,³⁶ for whom she could give no genealogical placement, saying only that he was "a relative" of Gaidana. A Dumna chief,

³⁶The name sounds like a Yokuts nickname and well may have been.

EP. 20) 9] Chukchansi

769 The Chukchansi at Picayune were the ceremonial washers of the Chukchansi at Aplau.
783 J.R. described the washing.

"The people who live right there, maybe a bunch from Picayune, come up. They heat water in a basket with hot rocks. Those people from Picayune wash the people who live right here [the mourning hosts] with this warm water. The people here give [in return] maybe half of the deer meat, and acorn meal to go with it, which their women have pounded up."

When the Picayune Indians get through washing the mourners, they all go back to their sleeping camps. The host captain, who lives here, goes back after being washed and sits down. He calls all the [his ?] people around. He says that now they are washed [ritually cleansed] and they can enjoy themselves. There was no definite plan of entertainment. If they felt like singing, they sang. Various games were played, a footrace was run, and so on.
[526] "They play anything they want."

769 They would play for a week, in the old times, said J.R. They ate the food that was ready. They had some acorn meal already pounded and cooked; they cooked more as needed. Some of this was given to the visitors. When they had enjoyed themselves for perhaps two days, possibly longer (they usually stayed a week), everybody went home. They just had fun. Played games. Danced. It was just to have fun. They just got together for that. The old fellows stayed near the fire [outdoors or in a sweat house ?]. The young girls got out to sing, dance, holler, have fun. The boys played together too. The young people all ran around, jumping, dancing, boys and girls together.
537 "After it is all over, it is finished. No one says anything more about it."

769 Dancing was the chief form of entertainment, however. Every night there would be dancing, only a little during the day. A doctor, if he knew how, would dance -- not because he was a shaman, but because he was a dancer. There would be three or four good dancers from Picayune, three or four from Friant (Gashowu, Kechayi, etc.), the same from Mariposa (Miwok). The captain of the community would tell certain persons to dance to entertain his visitors. Then a visiting captain would have his men perform. And so on: "when one bunch quits, another will start."

769 During all this time there were Indian "police" or managers on duty, who functioned only at this time. They went around with the captains to preserve order. They exhorted people to behave peacefully, to be good. They were called kut'eu.
625

769 No understanding of Chukchansi mourning rites is complete without perusal of an eyewitness account by Stephen Powers.¹³³ Kroeber's description of the ceremony should also be ex-

¹³³Ibid., 384-391.

son" into their opponents, and strike at each other with winnowing baskets. Often, when struck, they are able to extract the magic missile, but sometimes fail, whereupon the victors shout "*Wu-mou-wu-wu*," and receive pay for withdrawing their paralyzing power. On the first evening the performance is brief, a sort of warming up. The next night the shamans go at each other in earnest, and contend until morning. Although no public benefit whatever results, this rite appears to be rated more highly than the rattlesnake ceremony, on the ground that a greater number of medicine men participate. Shamans of special powers as opposed to bewitching and curative abilities do not enter the *heshwash*: rain, bear, and snake "doctors" stay out.

This contest of supernatural abilities has northern parallels; as among the Yuki in their *hulk'ilal* ceremonies. But the setting, meaning, and organization of the performances are different. In the one case there is a secret society of initiated impersonators; in the other an assembly of shamans with personally acquired powers. A nearer parallel is found among the Maidu shamans' competitions.

The *Ohowish* or "wishing" ceremony is also a pure demonstration of supernatural power. Sleight of hand is the central feature, as suggestion is in the *heshwash*. Several shamans gather in a specially made house or booth, behind a screen of tules, and perform to songs appropriate to the occasion. The skins of beavers and otters hang about the walls. These animals are the personal spirits of the *ohowish* medicine men, the "wishers" or "willers," whose power seems connected with water, as among their achievements mentioned is that of making fish in a vessel of water. Such displays appear to be the kernel of the ceremony, which ends toward morning by the performing shamans "fighting" one another magically.

The medicine bags here referred to savor of Plains Indian ideas more than of native Californian practices; although there is Pomo parallel.

The *Heshwash* and *Ohowish* extend from the southernmost tribes at least to the Tachi and Gashown; the habits of the Chukchansi are not known.

The *Ha'ishat* is a nonshamanistic dance, whose relation to other ceremonies, or purpose other than pleasure, has not become clear. A place and time, perhaps 12 days ahead, are appointed. The invitees then busy themselves securing quantities of food, laden with which they start out, and make camp for the night a mile or more away from the designated spot. In the morning the entire tribe, men, women, and children, every one carrying his pack of provisions, dance in a long single file, to the usual Yokuts "piston-rod step," all the way in to the meeting place. This must have been a most pic-

535 turesque spectacle when several tribes gathered at once; but it has
527 the appearance of being only a prelude.

CEREMONIAL PARAPHEARNALIA.

292 The eternal yellow-hammer forehead bands of the California In-
237 dians are not lacking among the Yokuts; but the characteristic dance
[30] costume of these tribes comprised the *chohun*, a skirt of strings of
eagle down, and the *djuh*, a tall headdress of tail plumes of magpies,
encircled at the base by crow feathers (Fig. 44). The eagle-down
skirt extends across the Sierra to the Shoshonean tribes as far east as
Death Valley (Pl. 42). It has not been reported from any part

[171]

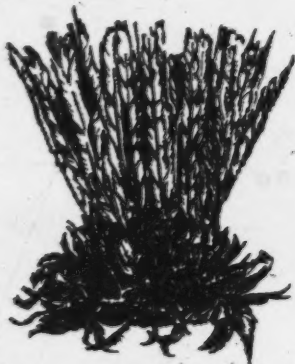


FIG. 44.—Yokuts dance headdress of
magpie and crow feathers.

of interior California other than the Yokuts, and in southern Cali-
fornia its place is taken by a skirt of
large eagle feathers. In this garment
we have thus to recognize either a local
development or an influence from the
Great Basin. The magpie and crow
headdress is found, with some slight
variation, among the Maidu and Pat-
win; and it may accordingly be as-
sumed for the intervening Miwok also,
though not yet reported from them.
With the Maidu, this ornament is part
of the apparel of god impersonators,
such as the *Sili* and Bear spirit; among
the Yokuts, who do not indulge in such
esoteric representations, it is worn in
the mourning dance, in the comple-
mentary dance of rejoicing, and by shamans. It is a familiar fact
that the same article or element of civilization is frequently utilized
for widely different purposes, and in quite diverse connections or
meanings, by distinct nations.

292 The *djuh* was held in place by a stick jammed through its base
237 and the hair as bunched under a tightly drawn head net—the usual
[30] central Californian device for fastening large feather ornaments
to the head. The *chohun* was made from the down of a large water
bird, called *goldat* by the valley tribes, when they experienced diffi-
culty in securing a sufficient supply of eagles. Sticks tipped with the
showy crest feathers of the mountain quail were passed through the
pierced ear lobes.

293 Two other ornaments were much used by the Yokuts: the *wacham*
237 and the *notomat*. The former was a loose bunch of feathers carried
[30] in the hand and swinging with every motion; the latter, a belt, also
worn as leg band, of strings of twisted hair cut off by mourners. This

221 Pleasure came from their beauty, their fragrance, and their indication of a
301 plentiful seed harvest to follow. Winter rainbows forecast plentiful seed crops,
824 for they were seen as four bands of color (magenta, blue, yellow, orange) of four
flowers whose seeds were prized.¹²

221 In April, when rattlesnakes were rousing from hibernation, came the very
796 important Rattlesnake Ritual, sponsored by the shamans controlling the creatures,
and participated in by all persons as a preventative from injury by rattlers during
the summer months. This ritual, which included a snake-handling display and
concluded with a feast, was attended by both local and extra-community persons.

221 On the lower Kings River, the Choinimni (Y) and probably other tribes
226 within the area of the spring salmon run (about May) held a simple river-side
ritual at their principal fishing sites. The local chief ate the first salmon speared,
after cooking it and praying to Salmon for a plentiful supply. Then others
partook of a salmon feast, and the season, so to say, was officially open. (Some
[423] foods were "moiety-owned," e. g., blackberries and mushrooms north of Kings
616] River; the possessing moiety collected but could not partake until they had
feasted the other moiety with the food.)

221 Disruption of village life came in late spring or early summer—from May
484 onward, depending upon the condition of the seed harvest. Chiefs directed the
general exodus in a minor way, publicly stating that now was the time to go, and
families departed for their habitual summer camps. At these, men caught fish
and small game which they dried for winter use, and, as the women collected loads
of seeds, transported the heavy burdens back to the village storage bins. There
were no special ceremonies for this season of dispersed households; instead local
[535] and more spontaneous entertainment took place: there is record of shamans danc-
527] ing at summer camps; there were pleasure dances in which both sexes participated;
children played late in the long evenings; and stories (myth-instruction) were
361 tabu. Camp locations varied with the change of crops—toward the valley, into
221
484

12 Play with flowers, so incompatible with conventional notions about Indians, was widespread in the West. Without especially seeking them the following references come to hand for Miwok, Maidu, Paviotse, Klamath, and Taos: S. A. Barrett and E. W. Gifford, *Miwok Material Culture* (Bulletin, Public Museum of the City of Milwaukee, vol. 2, pp. 117-376, 1933), pp. 222-223; Stephen Powers, *Tribes of California* (Contributions to North American Ethnology, vol. 3, Department of the Interior, United States Geographical and Geological Survey of the Rocky Mountain Region, Washington, D. C., 1877), p. 325; Robert H. Lowie, *Notes on Shoshonean Ethnography* (Anthropological Papers, American Museum of Natural History, vol. 20, part 3, 1924), pp. 306-307; Melville Jacobs, *Texts in Chinook Jargon* (University of Washington Publications in Anthropology, vol. 7, pp. 1-27, 1936), p. 12; Elsie Clews Parsons, *Taos Tales* (Memoirs, American Folklore Society, no. 34, 1940), p. 121.